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AMCONSUL HAMBURG
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AMCONSUL STUTTGART
AMCONSUL ZURICH
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
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AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABU DHABI 05867

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SUBJECT: ENGINEER COMMENTS ON LIFE IN RASHT, AND THE
- LIKELY LEADERS OF A POST-KHOMEINI IRAN

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: AN IRANIAN ENGINEER CLAIMED THAT WHILE SOME INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES IN THE CITY OF RASHT HAVE BEEN FORCED TO SEND EMPLOYEES TO THE WAR, THERE HAS BEEN NO SHORTAGE OF VOLUNTEERS. SINCE THE FIRMS WERE OPERATING AT LESS THAN FULL CAPACITY, THEIR ABSENCE AFFECTED OUTPUT ONLY marginally. INDUSTRIAL CHIEFS IN THE REGION WERE ESCORTED LAST SPRING THROUGH THE FAO PENINSULA. WEST GERMANY IS TRAINING MANY OF THESE ENGINEERS IN A "DIVIDEND-FOR-TRAINING" EXCHANGE PROGRAM. KHOMEINI IS LIKELY TO BE SUCCEEDED BY A "GROUP OF FIVE" THAT INCLUDES MONTAZERI, RAFSANJANI, KHAMENEI, AHMAD KHOMEINI, AND MESHKINI. END SUMMARY.

3. ON NOVEMBER 22, CONOFF DUBAI SPOKE WITH A U. S.-TRAINED IRANIAN ENGINEER RESPONSIBLE FOR WATER SYSTEMS IN A FACTORY IN BANDAR ANZALI, NEAR RASHT. IRANIAN'S OBSERVATIONS ARE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

4. INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY AND WAR RECRUITMENT: OF THE THREE MAJOR INDUSTRIES IN RASHT, THE TEXTILE AND PAPER MILLS ARE RUNNING AT ONLY ONE-HALF CAPACITY, WHILE THE ELECTRIC POWER PLANT CONTINUES AT FULL CAPACITY. TEN PER CENT OF THE TEXTILE AND PAPER EMPLOYEES HAVE HAD TO SERVE AT THE WAR FRONT, BUT THE POWER PLANT EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN EXEMPTED. SOURCE CLAIMED THAT NO FORCE HAD TO BE USED TO COERCE EMPLOYEES TO JOIN THE MILITARY. "BRAIN-WASHING" HAS BEEN SO EFFECTIVE THAT "IN RASHT THERE IS NEVER A SHORTAGE OF BASIJ." VOLUNTEERS ARE GIVEN 45 DAYS OF TRAINING IN RASHT, AND THEN ARE SENT FOR TWO TO FOUR WEEKS FURTHER TRAINING NEAR TEHRAN. HE SAID MANY IRANIANS BELIEVE THAT AN END TO

THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR WOULD NOT NECESSARILY MEAN AN END TO CONFRONTATION. THEY SEE THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR INCAPABLE OF ABSORBING IRANIAN SOLDIERS AND REASON THAT NEW CONFRONTATIONS, PERHAPS WITH PAKISTAN, WOULD BE USED TO KEEP THE SOLDIERS "OCCUPIED."

15. INDUSTRIAL HEADS VISIT FAO: IN APRIL, 1986, THE GOI ORGANIZED A TWO-WEEK TRIP TO THE FAO WAR FRONT FOR RASHT INDUSTRIAL LEADERS. THE TRIP HAD TWO OBJECTIVES: FIRST, TO FAMILIARIZE INDUSTRIAL HEADS WITH THE TYPES OF EQUIPMENT BEING USED SO THAT THEIR FACTORIES COULD FABRICATE SPARE PARTS. SAMPLE EQUIPMENT AND PARTS WERE COLLECTED, BUT ATTEMPTS TO REPRODUCE THEM IN RASHT AND BANDAR ANZALI FAILED. MOST SPARE PARTS, HE SAID, PARTICULARLY THOSE FOR HIGH PRESSURE COMPRESSORS, ARE BEING FABRICATED FROM AMERICAN AND BRITISH DESIGNS IN TURKEY, AND ARE BEING TRUCKED INTO IRAN. A SECOND OBJECTIVE WAS TO HAVE INDUSTRIAL LEADERS WITNESS THE DETERMINATION OF THE MILITARY, AND CONVEY FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS TO THEIR NEIGHBORS AND EMPLOYEES IN RASHT SO THAT THE FLOW OF BASIJ VOLUNTEERS WOULD CONTINUE UNIMPEDED.

16. EXCHANGING EMPLOYEE TRAINING FOR DIVIDENDS: SOURCE CLAIMED THAT THE GOI OWNS 25 PER CENT OF THE GERMAN CORPORATE GIANT KRUPP. INSTEAD OF PAYING DIVIDENDS TO THE GOI, THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT HAS WORKED OUT A SCHEME WHEREBY IRANIAN ENGINEERS ARE SENT FOR INDUSTRIAL TRAINING IN GERMANY INSTEAD. SOURCE SAID THAT IN THE SUMMER OF 1985, HE HAD RECEIVED A TWO-WEEK TRAINING COURSE IN WEST GERMANY IN ASSORTED METHODS OF WASTE WATER TREATMENT.

17. HOW MANY AYATOLLAHS DOES IT TAKE TO REPLACE KHOMEINI?: THIS SOURCE AND OTHER IRANIAN CONTACTS IN DUBAI BELIEVE THAT MUCH OF AYATOLLAH MONTAZERI'S RECENT DIFFICULTIES, INCLUDING THE ARREST OF MEHDI HASHEMI, ARE TRACEABLE TO AN UNWILLINGNESS AMONG OTHER LEADERS TO ACCEPT MONTAZERI AS THE SOLE LEADER OF THE POST-KHOMEINI ERA. THE IRANIAN CONSTITUTION ALLOWS FOR A THREE-TO-FIVE-PERSON GROUP TO LEAD THE NATION, AND THE LIKELY FIVE WHO WOULD SHARE THE LEADERSHIP AFTER KHOMEINI'S DEATH APPEAR TO BE: (A) AYATOLLAH MONTAZERI--HAVING BEEN CHOSEN BY KHOMEINI, HE IS NOT LIKELY TO BE EXCLUDED. HE IS SEEN BY MOST IRANIANS AS A "COMPASSIONATE" LEADER, IN CONTRAST TO THE "DICTATORIAL" KHOMEINI, DESPITE HIS EVIDENT LACK OF SOPHISTICATION OR COHERENT WORLD VIEW.

(B) HOJJAT-OL-ESLAM RAFSANJANI--AS SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT, HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO SHAPE EVENTS TO HIS OWN ADVANTAGE. IRANIANS CONTINUE TO NOTE THAT IT IS "NO COINCIDENCE" THAT RAFSANJANI WAS ABSENT BOTH TIMES WHEN BOMBS KILLED MANY OF HIS LIKELY RIVALS. MANY IRANIANS BELIEVE THAT HE WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO ASSURE HIS PLACE IN THE "GROUP OF FIVE" AND THAT, IF HE HAS TO SHARE POWER, IT WILL ONLY BE BECAUSE OF HIS WEAKER RELIGIOUS CREDENTIALS (HE IS NOT AN AYATOLLAH).

(C) PRESIDENT ALI HOSEINI KHAMENEI--LIKE RAFSANJANI, KHAMENEI HAS BEEN ABLE TO SOLIDIFY HIS ACCESS TO THE ELITES FROM HIS POSITION AS PRESIDENT. WHEN RAFSANJANI WANTED TO LIMIT THE POWER OF THE COMITEHS TO MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT CONSULTING HIGHER LEVELS OF THE GOI, KHAMENEI SUPPORTED THE COMITEHS' INDEPENDENCE, WHOSE MEMBERSHIP ARE NOT LIKELY TO FORGET HIS SUPPORT FOR THEM.

(D) AHMAD MUSAVI-KHOMEINI--AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI'S SON IS BELIEVED TO BE THE ONLY PERSON WITH UNLIMITED ACCESS TO THE IMAM. EVERY PERSON WHO CALLS ON THE AYATOLLAH MUST FIRST BE "APPROVED" BY "GATEKEEPER" AHMAD BEFORE HE IS ALLOWED TO SEE KHOMEINI. WHILE AHMAD RARELY FIGURES IN IRANIAN HEADLINES, IT IS BELIEVED THAT SINCE HE KNOWS ALL THAT HAS TRANSPIRED BETWEEN THE IMAM AND HIS GUESTS, HE WILL BE ABLE TO USE THIS KNOWLEDGE TO ASSUME HIS PLACE IN THE "GROUP OF FIVE." IN ADDITION, SOME IRANIANS IN THE MAJLIS HAVE REPORTEDLY VOICED THE CONCERN THAT "WE CAN NEVER ALLOW THE NAME 'KHOMEINI' TO FADE FROM OUR VIEW." ONE WAY OF ASSURING THIS IS TO KEEP AHMAD IN THE UPPER LEVELS OF THE GOI.

(E) AYATOLLAH ALI AKBAR MESHKINI--SPEAKER FOR THE "COUNCIL OF EXPERTS," HE RARELY MAKES NEWS. HOWEVER, IRANIANS WE HAVE TALKED TO IN DUBAI BELIEVE THAT HE IS ORCHESTRATING MUCH OF THE CONTINUED ANTI-WEST, ANTI-AMERICAN RHETORIC. SINCE HE ALLEGEDLY HAD A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN HELPING TO CHOOSE MONTAZERI AS THE IMAM'S SUCCESSOR, THE DEBT MONTAZERI OWES HIM MAY WELL BE REPAID WITH A POSITION IN THE "GROUP OF FIVE."

18. COMMENT: THESE OBSERVATIONS ON THE "GROUP OF FIVE" COME FROM IRANIANS WHOSE INFORMATION HAS PROVED TO BE RELIABLE IN THE PAST. WHILE MONTAZERI, RAFSANJANI, AND KHA-MENEI ARE MOST OFTEN CITED IN ANY DISCUSSION OF POST-KHOMEINI LEADERS, THE NAMES OF AHMED KHOMEINI AND MESHKINI HAVE APPEARED OFTEN ENOUGH TO WARRANT THEIR INCLUSION.

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